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January 19, 2012

Town of Estes Park awarded \$3 million federal grant for parking and transit project

The Town of Estes Park has been awarded a \$3 million U. S. Department of Transportation grant to assist with construction of a parking structure at the Town-owned Estes Park Visitor Center, 500 Big Thompson Ave. The project enhances the Town of Estes Park's efforts, in collaboration with Rocky Mountain National Park, to improve transit while reducing congestion and emissions in the Estes Valley and in Rocky Mountain National Park.

The construction site is a parking lot located east of the Estes Park Visitor Center. A convenient location for the structure, the Visitor Center serves as a hub for the Town's free shuttle service, which operates each summer and transports residents and visitors to more than 40 stops throughout the valley. It also serves as a stop for the Rocky Mountain National Park Hiker Shuttle. The Visitor Center and its staff served approximately 400,000 visitors in 2011.

The future parking facility is estimated to provide approximately 300 spaces, whereas the current lot provides approximately 86 spaces. The complex also includes an existing parking area to the north and northwest of the Visitor Center, as well as an additional parking lot south of the Big Thompson River.

The grant requires project completion within three years of grant acceptance. The construction timeline and final project details will be determined through a public process, with consideration given to future expansion as well as a design that preserves the aesthetics of Estes Park.

The \$3 million grant was awarded to the Town of Estes Park, after a competitive process, through the Paul S. Sarbanes Transit in Parks Program of the U.S. Department of Transportation. This program was established to address the challenge of increasing vehicle congestion in and around national parks and other federal lands. The parking structure is also supported by numerous local studies and surveys that indicate a need for improved transit and/or parking in Estes Park. Among them are the 2011 Town of Estes Park Citizen Survey, the Estes Park Local Marketing District Visitors Study, the Town's 2005 Parking Study, and the 2003 Transportation Study with Rocky Mountain National Park.

For more information, please contact the Public Information Officer at 970-577-3701. To receive Town news and/or meeting agendas in your email inbox, please email townadmin@estes.org.

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